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and
Typical Forms of Christianity

H.H. Wendt



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THE IDEA AND REALITY OF REVELATION

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The Idea and Reality
of
Revelation

and
Typical Forms of Christianity

Two Lectures

BY

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PREFACE.

The first of these two Lectures I delivered upon the invitation of the Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, at the Whit-week anniversary meetings in London, on May 24th, 1904, as the Essex Hall Lecture.

The second lecture was delivered 'on the Foundation of the Hibbert Trust' on May 27th, 1904, in Manchester College, Oxford, by invitation of the Rev. J. Edwin Odgers, M.A., Hibbert Lecturer in that College. As the second lecture is in a certain sense the complement of the first, I am glad to be able to publish them together.

For the English translation of my German manuscript I am indebted in the first case to the Rev. George Bremner, B.D., of Forres, N.B.; and in the second to the Rev. W. Tudor Jones, of Swansea.

H. H. WENDT.

Jena, *July* 4th, 1904.

THE IDEA AND REALITY OF REVELATION.

WHAT is the problem which I make an attempt to solve when I speak of Revelation?

By asserting that Christianity is founded on Revelation, Christians have expressed from the earliest days their conviction of the supreme value of their religion and of its superiority to all other religions and philosophical systems. What they mean is that the Christian Religion is not a mere human product, but a work of God himself—that God is not only the object of Christian faith, but also its author. By naming Jesus Christ the Revealer of God, they mean more than if they would merely call him a pre-eminent teacher and pattern of piety, a religious genius or hero. They mean that he is really an ambassador and organ of God, that his work is a divine work and his words are divine

words. He could be named a religious genius, teacher or hero by men who were not themselves Christians. But he can be named a Revealer of God only by those, who are his disciples and convinced of the truth of his preaching.

In ecclesiastical tradition, Revelation is generally supposed to be something miraculous, standing outside the regular sequence of natural, psychological and historical phenomena. Christian dogmatics, certainly, has always maintained theoretically that the whole world as created by God and depending on him is a divine Revelation which mankind is capable of apprehending by reason. But from this general Revelation there was distinguished Revelation in a special sense. This special Revelation was supposed to be brought about by God in miraculous manifestations — messages of angels, dreams, visions, inspirations. The religion of Israel, and the Christian religion were held to be revealed religions, because according to the Biblical reports God made himself known in those miraculous ways to the Patriarchs, to Moses, to the Prophets, to Jesus, to the Apostles. Jesus Christ was regarded as being the supreme agent of

Revelation, because he was the incarnation of the divine Logos, having thereby a unique knowledge of God and divine things. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were regarded as being documents of Revelation, because they were held to be due to supernatural inspiration.

Nowadays, just these miraculous occurrences, which were considered to be the essential element of Revelation, have become problematical to wide circles of Christians. I need not give detailed grounds for these doubts. Three main points will suffice.

1. The progress of the scientific study of the Bible has gradually destroyed the old idea of the miraculous inspiration of Scripture. The examination of the Old and New Testament thoughts showed that they exhibit an historical development with just such advances and relapses, incompatibilities and contradictions as we find in any other historical evolution of human thought. The investigation of the literary relations subsisting between the several writings, and of the internal evidences of their origin, has led to the clear perception that they must have arisen in the same way as any other literary work, that is, by employment of literary

sources and oral traditions, under the influence of individual motives and historical conditions. Special problems of biblical theology and criticism may be handled differently by different authorities. But whoever is acquainted with the problems of biblical theology and criticism, and deals with them from a scientific standpoint, has already broken with the old theory of inspiration.

2. The historical investigation of the life of Jesus, going hand in hand with the literary criticism of the gospels, has led to an essential modification of the old dogmatic christology. In the old dogmatic view, the emphasis which was laid upon the singular relation of Jesus to God, and his unique significance as the saviour of mankind, threw into the background the true estimation of his human nature. His true humanity, though recognized in theory, was in consequence of its connection with the divine logos conceived as miraculous in its origin and development and unlike ordinary human nature. This view indeed found some support in the gospels. As a whole, however, the gospels awaken a strong impression of Jesus' simple human nature and develop-

ment. The more we learn to separate the older from the more recent portions, the stronger this impression becomes. The historical-critical examination of the life of Jesus may have led to many mistakes. It has not succeeded in solving all the riddles and clearing up all the mysteries of his person. But there can be no doubt at all that the method is right and that it has led to much valuable and positive knowledge. The pains that have been taken to comprehend Jesus in the conditions of the age he lived in and to understand his being and working after the analogy of other psychological and historical development, have not been in vain. There is no incompatibility here with the facts shown by the gospels. On the contrary the method serves to illuminate these facts.

3. The progress in the investigation of the history of religions has led more and more to the knowledge that the Israelitic and the Christian religions cannot be sharply separated as revealed from heathen religions ; we cannot confine truth to the former, and see in the latter only error and darkness. Important ideas in the religion of Israel and in the Christian religion are found also in other religions. Enthusiastic preachers, who

felt themselves directly called and gifted by God have appeared there also. Visions and ecstasies such as are ascribed to holy men both of the Old and the New Testament have been experienced also by prophetic personalities of other religions. There also they have been conceived as Revelation. If we are sceptical towards the ecstasies in other religions, must we not view them with the same scepticism when we meet with them in the Old Testament and in Christianity?

It is from these results of criticism that our modern problem which deals with Revelation arises. When we give free scope for investigation, proceeding upon historical-critical and religious-historical lines, can we still maintain the old idea, that Christianity is founded on real Revelation and that Jesus Christ is the agent of the complete Revelation of God? What is the right idea of Revelation? Is the miraculous origin of a religious conception essential to this idea? And lastly, where can we recognize a reality of Revelation?

I.

The most characteristic feature of theological conceptions of Revelation in the nineteenth century is the emphasis laid upon

the fact that Revelation does not consist in a mere communication made to the intellect, or in a direct bestowal of thoughts and tenets, but above all in facts, facts in which God shows himself active and in which men win practical experience of his gracious will. Indeed if Revelation is to be the basis of a firm religious conviction, it is of the greatest importance that it should include such facts. Religious ideas due to a merely miraculous suggestion and inspiration with no relation to real facts could easily kindle religious enthusiasm into a sudden blaze. They might also form the ground of a religious theory, which on account of its miraculous origin would be held as true and handed down as authoritative. But they could not give rise to such a constant conviction as would remain firm amid doubts and difficulties. They could not be in any way distinguished from empty fancies and hallucinations. On the other hand, if God is active in the world in the furtherance of his plan of salvation, the fact of this activity must also afford a basis upon which men can form conclusions in regard to God and his will to save.

The question as to what the facts of divine Revelation are is answered differently

by different theological schools. One school lays the whole weight upon the miraculous incidents of the Old and New Testament history, in which God has manifested his decree for the salvation of men. Others—in Germany the followers of Ritschl specially—think that Revelation does not consist in these separate miraculous incidents, which are continually being questioned, but in the one certain historical fact which forms the centre of the whole story of Revelation. It consists of Jesus Christ himself; his moral and religious personality, his whole ministry of holy earnestness and holy love, which demonstrate to us in overwhelming fashion the gracious saving will of God. There are others who maintain that also Jesus Christ is not to be isolated as the bearer of Revelation. For us he would be no real Revelation, if we did not find in other men and in ourselves a higher life and higher powers analogous to what we have in him. They hold that we have no right at all to exalt certain single incidents or personalities as special Revelations of God. They say that we must look upon the total working of God in the world, the whole natural world and its regular development, the whole spiritual and

moral life in man, the whole evolution of history, civilisation and religion, as the great and universal Revelation in which God makes himself known.

To my thinking this last view is to be approved from the Christian standpoint. According to the Christian belief everything in the world is not only entirely worked by God but altogether conditioned by his love, which has the kingdom of God for its goal. For that reason we must treat the whole existence and course of the world as the fact through which God reveals himself. Only by the consideration of the totality of his operations can we acquire a perfect conception of his will and work in relation to us. This indeed does not exclude the fact that certain individual incidents and personalities in the world stand in closer and more direct relation to the kingdom of God and afford us in consequence clearer evidences of God's saving intention than others.

But though it is true that to Revelation proper there belong facts in which God shows himself operative, there is still to be distinguished from these facts the intellectual act in which man actually learns about God from them. The idea of Revelation always

includes the effect of knowledge. It is confusing to call every saving operation of God, as such, a Revelation. A divine operation only becomes a real Revelation in so far as men in it or by it come to some knowledge of God. The question then comes to be, in what relation does this intellectual act of man stand to God; whether and in what sense it can be described as an operation of God.

We must start from a general consideration of the nature of the psychological process in which new religious ideas are acquired. We do not refer to the case where religious ideas are merely learned and taken over on the ground of authority, but to the case where in an individual, living religious convictions either arise afresh or extend themselves.

First we must say, negatively, that these new religious convictions do not arise by the processes and conclusions of pure reason. Just as religious faith cannot be demonstrated through bare reason, so in its origin it is not due to an activity of the reason alone—even where men conclude to God as cause from facts of experience. This concluding from facts within the world to the supra-mundane God, is very different from a mere intellectual

conclusion. In the religious conception and interpretation of facts, the question is never one of the mere fact, but always at the same time of the value of the fact for mankind and of its relation to other facts to which men attach value. In the last instance, the origin of religious perceptions always involves an interpretation and valuation of the whole world as the person concerned knows it; an interpretation and valuation of his own whole nature, his happiness, his requirements and necessities, his tasks and his guilt. In most cases also there are involved an interpretation and valuation of historical events and developments, of historical individuals and societies, and of the historically acquired benefits of civilization and social life. All these things upon whose interpretation and valuation the matter turns, are so complicated and include so many obscure points, so many possibilities of different value, that they do not by any means afford the basis upon which conclusions of pure reason leading to a knowledge of God may be formed.

Positively, we say that religious conviction in its beginning and in its further development is acquired in acts of intuition. A light

suddenly arises for man. He lays hold of the thought of an unseen world lying behind and above the visible world; or rather he is laid hold of by this thought. All at once he sees worldly things in the illumination which they receive through their connection with the higher world. He sees how this illumination solves his difficulties and removes his weight of troubles. If he already possesses a treasure of religious knowledge, a new and special element in the nature and will of God suddenly dawns upon him. The difficulties and obscurities which have till now beset him become elucidated. New tasks and new aims are presented to him.

This religious intuition is most clearly to be observed when prophetic personalities acquire new religious insight in moments of ecstasy. They hear a heavenly voice; they behold a heavenly apparition. But this ecstatic enlightenment is only one form of religious intuition. The origin of new religious insight even when it does not come about in this ecstatic fashion, is essentially similar in its psychology. It consists of a sudden dawning, a sudden flashing of religious ideas. When pious people experience this inward enlightenment they regard it as an act of

heavenly grace. Even when religious knowledge is first acquired by way of training and tradition, such intuition is necessary, in order that the truth and the value of what is learned may become clear to the learner. Where this enlightenment does not find entry of itself it cannot be constrained by any demonstration of authority.

This intuitive religious perception is a mysterious thing. It is indeed not without analogies. In their creative periods poets and artists receive in an inward flash the pictures to which they then seek to give a form capable of perception by the senses. In the same way investigators and discoverers experience that new thoughts or combinations occur to them, and light falls on things till then obscure in a way that astonishes even themselves. The greatest strides of science are probably made thus: gifted thinkers find in an act of divination the key to a problem and then seek a systematic foundation for the solution so found. But these analogies from art, science, and invention cannot really explain the grounds of intuitive religious knowledge. The dawning of new ideas in the case of poets and thinkers is not less mysterious and puzzling than the

inward flash of new religious insight in the case of the pious.

This religious intuition is a mystery even when it is not without psychological preparation. The creative ideas of artists, investigators and inventors have always a connecting-point with the intellectual life already present in these gifted men. The more possibility there is of such connection, the richer the new ideas become. So religious enlightenment, whether it comes about in ecstatic fashion or not, is always mediated in some sort of psychological manner. Frequently the recipient of such enlightenment is unconscious of his capability to receive it. It may even appear to him that the new knowledge vouchsafed to him, is in complete contradiction to all that he till now knew and valued and sought. Nevertheless his fitness to receive the light may have been really very great. On the one hand this capability might consist in the fact that his former views, even when he was perfectly convinced of their truth, never brought him full peace. He was oppressed by inward troubles which begot in him a longing for and an impulse after something new and higher. On the other hand it might consist in the

fact, that through communications from others or through his own experience, he possessed a certain knowledge of facts which, now that he has received the light, are seen to confirm it. Up till now he had not seen these facts in their proper significance. He looked upon them as symptoms of something quite different. Now however they emerge into the proper light. Religious intuitions, therefore, because they possess this psychological connection and mediateness, are essentially different from the acts of inspiration with no psychological foundation, which ecclesiastical tradition conceived them to be. Accordingly, we do not give them the simple name of miracle. Yet at bottom, in spite of all connection and mediateness they are extremely wonderful. They cannot be understood as simply necessary products of the factors present in the mental life of man and the influences from without. They contain a quite novel and incalculable element. In their creative aspect they are as mysterious as the acts of free self-determination.

In the language of religious history it is especially these moments of dawning and flashing of new religious insight that constitute Revelation. This name was bestowed on

them because and in so far as they were conceived to be immediate communications of God to men. So also in the New Testament. It is a Revelation when the knowledge is imparted to Paul in the vision near Damascus that the Crucified one whom he had persecuted is the Son of God exalted to heavenly Lord, by whose death God has established the ordinance of grace (*Gal.* 1¹²⁻¹⁶). We have 'revelations' when in ecstasy Paul hears God's words and instructions (*Gal.* 2², *II Cor.* 12¹⁻⁷). The 'prophets' in the apostolic church have 'revelations' when they suddenly feel themselves enabled to comprehend and compelled to declare divine mysteries (*I Cor.* 14^{6,26,30}). But it is also a Revelation when apart from all ecstasy the first knowledge of the Messiahship of Jesus dawns upon Peter (*Matt.* 16¹⁷), and it is Revelation when under the preaching of the gospel people attain to the knowledge that God in his love wishes their eternal salvation. Many of the unwise of earth experience this revelation, while from the wise after the flesh it is withheld (*Matt.* 11²⁵, *I Cor.* 26⁷⁻¹⁰).

This conclusion that the dawning of religious knowledge in man is a 'Revelation' effected by God is always religious in nature.

It can only exist side by side with other religious views. It is impossible to conclude, as Descartes did, from the single fact that in the finite human mind there is present the idea of an infinite God, that this God actually exists, because only he himself could have placed the idea in man. One who has no other motives and supports for the religious belief in God will, in some other way, come to terms with the mysterious element in religious intuition. He will content himself with the consideration that there are many other obscurities in our spiritual life which we cannot analyze, whose origin nevertheless we presuppose according to fixed psychological laws. It belongs to the regular nature of our spiritual life that out of the psychic factors which can be recognized, there issue frequently products which represent something quite new, different, far higher and richer than we can look for and reckon upon.

But one who stands upon the basis of religious conviction will interpret this fundamental of religion, namely the sudden dawn of religious insight, from his religious standpoint. He will look upon it as an act of self-manifestation of God to man, as a 'Revelation.' According to the nature of

his religious views in general he will formulate this recognition of Revelation in different ways. If the operations of God in the world be conceived as only a miraculous interposition in the ordinary course of the world, the origin of religious insight in men will only be regarded as Revelation in so far as it bears a strikingly miraculous character, that is to say, in so far as it happens in prophetic ecstasy, in visions or similar acts. But where the real Christian view of the world is held, that everything in it, even the course of nature according to fixed law and the ordinary development of psychic processes, is due to the immediate operation of God, then in Revelation the main importance will not attach to its miraculous character. The essential point in the idea of Revelation which distinguishes the knowledge acquired by Revelation from other knowledge, is according to this view, not that God himself gives the knowledge—that is the case in all knowledge—but that he is at the same time the object of the knowledge. Even when the knowledge of God is won in an entirely normal fashion which follows all the rules of logic and psychology, we can, from the Christian standpoint, consider even this a real

Revelation of God. In the last instance it is God himself, who thus brings himself home to men.

But although in the Christian view the miraculous character of the event by which the knowledge of God is acquired is unimportant, yet as a matter of fact this event does include that mysterious element of the sudden dawn and appearance of knowledge till now hidden—that element which cannot be made or constrained but must be ‘given.’ Even according to the Christian view and speech, therefore, there is good ground for bringing the idea of Revelation into a special relation with the mysterious intuitive element in the origin of religious insight. The fact that this religious intuition is analogous to the intuition of artists, scientists and inventors does not affect the Christian view of it as Revelation. For even in the domains of art, science and invention, these creative acts of intuition are, in the Christian view, proofs of the fact that the spiritual life of man is of a higher kind than the whole world of natural things which follow fixed laws and stand in a causal relation to one another. As certainly as the Christian sees in the whole course of nature an immediate product of God, so

certainly is he convinced that there is a supra-mundane life, a life in God and from God, and that every man possesses in his personal spirit a germ of this supra-mundane divine life which is destined to grow. In the spiritual and moral disposition and activity of man the Christian recognises manifold proofs of the connection with the supra-mundane life. A particularly important element in this connection is the human capability of receiving religious intuitions and of perceiving the supra-mundane ground and purpose of worldly affairs. This intuition is called by Christians Revelation, because in it the divine power which is working in the human mind, serves to make God himself known.

Of course religious ideas acquired by intuition are Revelation only in so far as they are true. Whether they are true, and how far they are true, cannot be learned by the mere fact of their intuitive origin. Even their origin in the form of prophetic ecstasy does not guarantee their truth. Error and truth, pseudo- and genuine prophecy, may appear in the same manner and in close connection with one another. We find exactly the same in the domains of science and invention, where worthless fancies arise in the same

ntuitive way as valuable ideas and seem at first to be as illuminating as the most ingenious discoveries. Innumerable religious ideas among men have only the value of fancies and illusions; but it would be utterly wrong on that account to combat the fact that there is an intuitive perception of real religious knowledge and that just here a real Revelation is effected. The only question is whether there is any criterion to distinguish this true revelation from vain imaginings.

The only criterion is experience. Any new ideas which occur to us must prove their truth by connecting themselves with some fact established by experience. They must either explain facts already known but not yet understood, or lead to the perception of an unknown fact, which after being perceived, gives them permanent confirmation. So it is also with religious ideas. They too require to be brought into connection with facts of experience in order to be recognised as true.

Thus our consideration of the element of Revelation which is involved in the process of religious knowledge, leads us back to our earlier thought that the right Revelation of God requires facts worked by God, facts on

which the knowledge of God can be founded. These two elements complement one another in giving rise to a true Revelation of God and thereby a convinced knowledge of him : on the one hand facts in the world in which God is operative ; on the other hand the ability of man to behold the supra-mundane. The facts constitute real Revelation only in so far as in moments of intuitive illumination we perceive God as working in them. The intuitive view of God again is Revelation only so far as it finds support in the facts.

II.

And now, having made ourselves clear on the idea of Revelation, we are in a position to approach the question, where we meet with the *reality* of Revelation. We notice in the first place how far Jesus Christ experienced and brought Revelation, and how far in his whole person he may be called a Revelation.

The preaching which Jesus conceived to be his life's work on earth was in the truest sense original,—not indeed every separate thought, but the consistent development of certain main thoughts, and the bringing of these into a unified and clear religious view, with the exclusion of other ideas which until then had

been considered valuable and necessary. His preaching of the Fatherhood of God was original; not the mere employment of the name of Father nor simply the recognition of moral characteristics in God, but the precedence given to the Fatherly love in God's character, and the certainty that in consequence of it the whole relation of God to man is governed not by legal regulations, but by the same moral laws which subsist between father and child. His preaching of everlasting life was also original; not merely the thought that there is a life beyond death, a higher and heavenly life, but the idea that only this higher life is the true life and that everything turns upon it; that it is a treasure beside which all earthly goods have no value, the true realisation of all hopes which men placed upon the promised kingdom; and that the real value of all earthly things and events depends on whether they serve or hinder the attainment of that true salvation. Then again his demand for a child-like trust of the heavenly Father was original; not the thought, that men may place trust on God, but that they may repose in perfect trust upon him, a trust which is not limited by any earthly difficulties or any opposition of de-

moniacal powers, a trust which includes the consciousness of the lack of any merit in God's eyes, a trust in the sin-forgiving grace of God. And finally his requirement of love was original: not merely that we should love our neighbour, but that we should be animated by an unlimited and spontaneous forgiving love, a love which does good even to an enemy, a love which in its nature and intensity resembles the love of God, and owes its being to the love of the heavenly Father which we experience.

How did Jesus become possessed of his original religious views? He too acquired them, not through reason and reflection, but through intuition. So far as this consciousness was concerned, the moments of such intuition were moments of divine revelation.

At his baptism he received a Revelation which bore the character of a vision. Through what he saw and heard from heaven he conceived the knowledge which determined his consciousness of Messianic calling. It was the knowledge that, as the son who stood in intimate connection with the heavenly Father, the beloved in whom the father was well pleased, he was also the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. Till then he had adhered

to the traditional idea of his people, that the coming kingdom of God was to be a kingdom of political might and glory and that therefore the bringer of it must be first of all a son of David, a ruler and a hero. Lacking, as he did, every sign and means of earthly kingship, he had been unable to think of himself as the Messiah. Now the knowledge was granted to him that what he possessed as son of the heavenly Father provided him with all that was necessary for the Messiah and the bringing in of the Messianic kingdom. The possession of earthly goods and political power could add no element of value to his supreme and most important and most blessed well-pleasingness to God. Every effort to attain worldly power could only mar the purity and the elevation of the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom. Indeed, the first dawning of this knowledge, that earthly happiness and political might had no share in the supreme religious ideal, marked a new epoch in religious conceptions. It indicated progress towards a new and higher religion than that of the Old Testament. In the period of temptation, this conviction, in spite of all the doubts which assailed it from the Old Testament and from Jewish tradition,

became an unassailable possession for Jesus. But originally it dawned upon him in the moment of baptism. Later Christianity proved unable to value the significance of this Revelation at the baptism of Jesus rightly, because it proceeded on the belief that before the baptism Jesus must have been aware of his Messiahship. Accordingly, it seemed to this later Christianity that the vision at the baptism of Jesus was mainly a Revelation about Jesus for others and especially for the Baptist who was to be a witness to Jesus as the Messiah. That, however, is not the original sense of what happened. Originally the vision at the baptism was a Revelation for Jesus himself and for him alone. It was the Revelation in which his consciousness of Messiahship was born.

But significant as this incident at the baptism of Jesus was, we are not to see in it the only Revelation of which he was conscious. In ecstatic visions many founders and prophets of other religions have been his superior. His peculiar greatness and superiority to all others is to be found in the clearness and tranquillity with which he continually directed his inward glance on God and the heavenly life. This constant consciousness of God is borne

out by many statements recorded in the fourth gospel, which according to my view possess a historical basis. When Jesus says that he speaks only of that which he has seen and heard from his Father (*John* 3¹¹, 5¹⁹, 6⁴⁶, 8^{16, 28, 38, 40, 47}, 15¹⁵), he is not thinking of any miraculous knowledge of God brought with him out of his pre-existence, but of an intuitive consciousness of God during his earthly life. His antagonists whose external way of thinking knew no such intuitive knowledge of God (5³⁷), considered his claim to see and hear God arrogance and blasphemy (8^{27, 48}). Jesus himself, however, was aware that what he experienced, though not external and sensuous, was nevertheless a real beholding of God, and such a beholding of God as is alone adequate to his spiritual nature. That he knew God so was a gracious gift of his heavenly Father. He saw the Father because the Father showed himself to him and disclosed to him his whole nature and will (*John* 5²⁰, 12⁴⁹, *Matt.* 11²⁷, *Luke* 10²²).

Was he mistaken in this idea of himself? The ultimate proof of the truth and value of his knowledge and preaching of God as Revelation can not be found in his witness. It must be given in our own personal ex-

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perience. Whoever is vividly impressed with the fact that the preaching of Jesus, so transcendental in content and tendency, is confirmed by the facts in the world, by the facts of our inner life, and by the demands of our conscience, and whoever feels that it alone affords the proper key to the understanding of the natural world and human history, he will perceive that it was a real Revelation of God which Jesus obtained in his religious intuition.

But we have still to consider the significance of Jesus as Revelation from another side. Jesus was not only a man of religious insight, not only a teacher and prophet. He was at the same time a man of action, a man of power, a man of character, a personality living from and in God. What he taught he lived. What he asked of others he did himself with the greatest intensity and completeness. He was the realisation of the filial relationship to God. He lived a life of love to his heavenly Father. He placed his whole trust on God, found his whole happiness in fellowship with God and fixed all his hope not on earthly goods, but on the salvation of heaven. He was filled with a deep love to men, permeated through and through with the unselfish impulse to bring help to all who

needed it, to bring to all the poor, all sinners, and all the weary, the highest and truest salvation. Throughout the entire performance of the tasks which he knew to be laid upon him by God he maintained a self-sacrificing fidelity which yielded to no difficulties or dangers, but remained firm even to the death of the cross.

This whole bearing of Jesus was a practical demonstration of his preaching of the heavenly father, of eternal life and of filial relationship to God. It served to make his preaching more intelligible and more impressive than could have been possible by mere words. It was a method of expressing the religious thoughts which he had acquired by Revelation and which he was called to communicate to men. But it was more. It was the proof of a real power, which he possessed, a higher, supra-mundane power. It is only by such power that it is ever possible for men for the sake of moral and religious obligations to overcome constantly and purely all the natural impulses towards earthly life and prosperity. This supra-mundane power accredited his religious preaching. To Jesus himself, the constant feeling of being equipped with the spiritual power of God was the psychological precondition of his intuitive perception of

God's Fatherly nature and his consciousness of being his son, the divinely chosen Messiah. Among all the troubles which might have awakened in him doubts of God's goodness and of his own Messianic calling, this inward experience, this possession of divine grace and strength supplied him with something to cling to. For us the fact has the same value. Certainly we do not behold the higher and divine life in him alone; but nowhere do we perceive it in such strength and purity, in such all-prevailing greatness as in Jesus Christ. Thus he represents in his moral and religious being and practice a fact of divine Revelation, related in the closest fashion to the revealed knowledge which he preaches. Of course the whole world constitutes the complex of facts in which the truth of the religious preaching of Jesus must demonstrate itself. But to this great complex there belongs also the historical fact of Jesus Christ's appearance in the world, the fact that there has been a person anointed with the fulness of the divine spirit, who has proved the world-overcoming power of this spirit not only in isolated acts, but in his whole conduct even to his death upon the cross. This is not only one fact among

others. It is the most important of all, standing in immediate relation to the saving purpose of God. We recognise in it the special means which God has chosen to establish his kingdom, a kingdom of true children of God.

When we interpret the significance of Jesus as Revelation thus, we do not in any way break with the acknowledgment of his human nature. The power of intuitive religious perception which we attribute to him in the highest degree, is possessed also by others and is in no kind of opposition to the ordinary development of human mental life. It is the same thing with the moral power of Jesus. However free that power is from the limitations of mere natural forces, it is not foreign to the nature of man. In greater or less degree we find it in all men. The possession of it in potency belongs to the likeness of God which constitutes the innate superiority of man to the other creatures.

With this conception of ours, we require to set no barriers in the way of the historical investigation and explanation of the life of Jesus. Our recognition of the supreme significance of Jesus as Revelation does not depend on the historical character of single

wonders and miraculous experiences of Jesus. It therefore allows full liberty to the critical investigation of the evangelical reports of miracles. Further, it makes nothing turn either on the question whether in the doctrinal form in which Jesus gave his gospel he was more or less influenced by the ideas of his age. What he discovered by religious intuition he expressed in the words and ideas of his time, and he applied it to the traditional views and practical conditions which he found to hand. In all this he was of course influenced by the age in which he lived. But he did more than only take up and work over traditional material. He had also new religious conceptions and brought them into unity. Our acknowledgment of his supreme significance as Revelation depends on the single question whether those fundamental views, which, taken together, form the special feature of his religious knowledge, were due to him first of all, and whether in his personality and in his work he proved himself a pure, true child of God, faithful unto death. The progress of historical and critical investigation of the life of Jesus has not made either of these points problematical. The more we

read the gospels with critical judgment and learn to distinguish the reports of the older sources from the additions and reflections of later hands, the greater is Jesus seen to be in respect of these very points.

Jesus Christ is the highest Revelation of God, but not the only one. He himself felt that he stood on the ground of earlier Revelation. It is one of the features of his peculiar greatness that with all his knowledge of his complete communion with and knowledge of God and with his clear perception of the defects of the Old Testament religion, he nevertheless did not simply oppose his preaching of God to the Old Testament. He knew that he was not sent to destroy the law and the prophets, the sum of the Revelation then acknowledged. Nor was his object only to sanction their given contents. What he desired was to bring the ideas which they contained to completeness (*Matt. 5¹⁷*). If we take this view of Jesus, we must acknowledge a historical development of Revelation in mankind from a lower to a higher level. And when we know what the apex of this historical development was, we are in a position to judge the preceding stages which led up to it. The conviction that the know-

ledge of God which Jesus preached is founded upon a perfect Revelation, involves the testing of all other religious ideas by the standard which he supplies. These other ideas contain truth so far as they are in agreement with the preaching of God by Jesus.

If we apply this standard, no clear distinction can be drawn between the Old Testament religion as being founded upon Revelation and all other religions as not being so. On the other hand we cannot attribute all religious ideas in the same degree to Revelation. Within the religious conceptions themselves, Israelite and non-Israelite, we must distinguish between such elements as are due to Revelation and such others as are only the fading products of mistaken human fancy and speculation.

Even in the heathen religions there are elements of true Revelation. The old apologetic idea of the λόγος σπερματικός is well justified. This idea was lost to Christianity for centuries, because the real Revelation was identified with Scripture and the heathen religions were judged only according to their relation to Holy Scripture and ecclesiastical dogma. Our age has come to be of another opinion. In Christianity, on

the one hand, it has learned to distinguish between the words of Scripture with ecclesiastical doctrine and the religious views of Jesus as their proper kernel and ideal. In the heathen religions, on the other hand, it has come to distinguish between the elements which belong to traditional mythology and ceremonial and those elements which belong to real piety. Thus we are able now to give its proper place to the old idea of the *λόγος σπερματικός*. When we direct our attention upon those elements in the heathen religions which belong to real piety, we find there also points of relation to the religious views of Jesus. These can be detected wherever the faithful believe in the existence of a higher divine might which rules the world and stands in living communion with mankind; wherever the pious have a longing after this communion with the Divinity, a longing after participation in the higher life and supernatural spiritual possessions; wherever piety is placed in relation to the moral life; wherever the divinity is regarded as the protector of moral laws and communities and as the authority which stands behind the demands of conscience. Nowhere of course do we find these elements clearly and consistently worked out;

nowhere are they without admixture and disfigurement. They flash up only singly and fleetingly. Generally they quickly disappear behind mythological draperies or weeds of superstition. Yet in spite of their sporadic and deformed existence they represent something true and valuable.

The moments of intuition in which these ideas of true piety originally arise, and afterwards are adopted and actually felt by others, are to be regarded as moments of real Revelation. We must, however, distinguish between that which other religions consider Revelation and that which is to be regarded as such from the Christian standpoint. Not the theophanies of which mythology speaks, not the priestly writings and maxims which were held to be sacred and inspired, not the visions and oracles of professional seers, are to be viewed by us as Revelation. It may be that the moments of ecstatic inspiration and vision were really moments of a divine dawning of real knowledge of God. But in the forms of ecstasy many empty fancies and morbid extravagances can find expression. The moments in which real notions of the nature and will of God dawned upon the pious may be quite obscure in the memory of later generations.

Within the religion of Israel these elements of the true knowledge of God, which were not lacking in other religions, have attained a much richer development than anywhere else outside Christianity. There they have gone through a connected development which we can trace back to the earliest beginnings of the people. The henotheism of the patriarchs and the Mosaic period developed gradually in the time of the great prophets into a spiritual monotheism. From early times this henotheism and monotheism of Israel bore a specially ethical character. The one God of Israel who came to be more and more recognised as the one God of the whole world, was conceived as full of justice, truth, mercy and faithfulness. It was he who appointed the moral laws for men. He was a Judge over Israel and the peoples and ruled according to moral laws. The prophets never wearied of repeating that this God had no pleasure in external ceremonies, but only in the right doing and justice of men. In consequence of their knowledge of the moral nature of their God, the pious Israelites came to have a strong confidence in his help and blessing for the people, and for everyone who was true to him. This confidence remained

firm amid such experiences of the present time as seemed to stand in strong contrast to the righteousness of God. In view of these experiences a beautiful hope for the future was developed. A day would come when God would solve all inconsistencies and grant victory to the just cause of every pious man and of his whole people. Originally this hope for the future only aimed at the rescue of individuals from their necessities, and the restoration of the people to a happy and powerful political condition. But in the later, post-exilic period there was developed also the hope of a retributive justice of God in the beyond, a rising of the pious from earth to participation in the messianic salvation or to everlasting heavenly life.

Yet not even in Israel had these elements of the right knowledge of God come to expression in unified connection and unmixed purity. It was always only one current of the religion of Israel which preserved and developed them. Alongside there ran the wider priestly current, which concerned itself with the preservation and development of the old traditional ceremonial and other ritual. To a certain extent the demands of this other current were capable of connection with the

ideas of the prophetic party ; so far, that is, as they too were due to a constant faith in the one God of Israel. But in its particularistic national tendency, and in the emphasis which is laid upon the externals of sacrifice and levitical ceremonies, this priestly current was widely different from the ethical tendency of the prophetic ideas. These differences were bound to lead to conflict. To them were added the remnants of ancient semitic tribal religion and old local cults which propagated themselves in the form of popular superstition, in myths or rites of various kinds. There were also religious influences exercised by the great civilized peoples with which Israel came into contact : Egypt, Phoenicia, Babylonia, Persia. These were partly polytheistic and partly dualistic in character. But among all these dissimilar factors the elements of true divine knowledge were maintained. Temporarily they might be suppressed. But sooner or later they broke out again victorious.

From our Christian standpoint, therefore, we must recognize in Israel an especial treasure of actual revelation. The agents of it, though not exclusively, were chiefly the prophetic men who felt themselves

called and impelled by Jaweh to preach 'God's words' to the people of Israel (e.g. *Amos* 1¹⁴). This does not mean all disciples of the prophetic schools and all professional seers who experienced ecstasies and gave forth oracles, but those single pious men who received by a vivid inward intuition their knowledge of God's will. The truth of their preaching was not recognized by any outward marks. But the true prophets were aware that their preaching would, in the future, be proved right (e.g. *Jerem.* 28⁹); and we can claim that it was proved so, not in its whole contents, but in the main thoughts which the facts of inward experience have permanently credited to the pious.

This view, that in Israel a unique stream of Revelation has flowed, a stream which formed the special preparation for the supreme Revelation in Jesus Christ, would not at all lose in value, if the advance of research in the field of the history of religions should prove that certain valuable elements in the religion of Israel, e.g. the monotheistic idea, or the idea of moral attributes and requirement in the divinity, existed already in the oldest oriental religions and thence found their way to Israel. Such religious ideas

would still possess the same worth as Revelation, even if they arose beyond the confines of Israel. Nor will the significance of the fact, that these thoughts were long preserved in Israel and gradually extended, be lessened by the knowledge that the seed of them existed already beyond Israel. The progress made in the history of religions cannot alter our general conception of what is to be regarded as Revelation and the greater abundance of it in Israel than in other religions. It can only show us more clearly how the historical development of Revelation was effected in single cases. The great and fascinating task of a history of religion, and specially of the religion of Israel, is to teach us to see ever more clearly the development of the true knowledge of God, the development of Revelation in religions. Christians have no ready-made opinions as to how this historical development of Revelation outside Christianity has run. That we can and must with perfect freedom ask of the proper historical witnesses.

According to the Christian view the historical development of Revelation reached its culminating point in Jesus Christ, but not its end. Within the Christian church we have

to recognize a continually widening Revelation. I shall not discuss here the manner in which the consciousness of real Revelation expressed itself in apostolic and post-apostolic Christianity. I shall only remind you that in the later period, from Montanism onward, the enthusiastic sects laid emphasis on the thought that actual Revelation does not belong only to the past as a privilege confined to the apostolic church, but that it is always taking place in the true Christian church. It may be thought that this idea may detract from the right valuation of the supreme Revelation in Jesus Christ. It need not. According to the proper conception, the subsequent Revelation of God in the Christian church is not designed to take the place of or supplement the Revelation in Jesus Christ, but to help us to understand that Revelation and lay hold on it. The highest knowledge of God which was first received and preached by Jesus can be apprehended by others only in moments of intuition, when the truth and value of this knowledge become luminous for them. This light must be given to them. The Christian faith is, in this respect, a gift of God.

I say: in this respect. For in faith we must distinguish between the different factors which constitute it. Faith is a matter not only of knowledge, but even more of the will. It is the demand for God and the divine life. The Christian faith is a living trust in the grace of the heavenly Father and striving after the blessedness of God's children. So far as faith is an act of will it must, in my opinion, be viewed as more than a gift of God or a purely divine operation. For I am convinced that in its essence Christianity is not deterministic. It allows for the moral freedom of men. Faith must be an act of free decision. Man is himself answerable for this act of will and is guilty when he neglects it. By an independent act of will he is to turn away from mere transitory things to God and the eternal happiness of heaven. He wins the blessings of the true child of God in proportion as he exhibits this will to believe. But this act of will has the knowledge of God as its psychological presupposition. This knowledge must first dawn upon men through Revelation. Without such Revelation there can be no Christian faith.

So we may form, at last, our conclusion as to the purpose of Revelation in its whole

historical development. Revelation, wherever it exists and creates in mankind a knowledge of God, is a means towards the fulfilment of the loving purpose of God which aims at educating men to become his free children, participating in his moral attributes and supra-mundane life. All God's workings have this education of mankind as their final end. This end is served by the whole natural world; it is furthered by the mental equipment of man with reason, conscience, and freedom; and it is served also by the religious knowledge which God has granted to man in a gradual historical Revelation, which finds its fullest expression in Jesus Christ. 'Of God and through him and unto him are all things; to him be glory for ever. Amen.'

TYPICAL FORMS OF CHRISTIANITY

TYPICAL FORMS OF CHRISTIANITY.

HAVING the honour as a German Theologian to give a Lecture in the seat of this ancient and renowned University, what subject shall I treat? I propose to speak about typical forms of Christianity. This is a topic of a very general kind. It does not give any occasion for placing before you new scientific details and fresh results of special investigation. But it supplies, I think, an excellent opportunity for showing plainly how modern Protestant Theologians in Germany, especially those who have learnt of Albrecht Ritschl and Adolf Harnack, conceive the historical development of Christianity, and in what direction they seek to influence its further progress.

The Christian Religion has proved itself in history a very variable quantity. Very

different forms of Christianity have followed each other, and have existed simultaneously side by side. It is an interesting task for the theologian to grasp the great abundance of these forms, and to classify and arrange them from definite points of view. Church History gives us at first only their chronological and local connections. But it is also possible to group them according to the relationship of their contents. To speak of various typical forms of Christianity, involves the attempt to co-ordinate the phenomena according to this inner relationship.

But I do not only intend to characterize the various Churches and Denominations, which are divided from each other by their special creeds and organisations, after the fashion of Comparative Symbolics. It is indeed of great importance and of great practical use to distinguish these groups of Christianity, which have developed and established themselves in the course of history with a distinct consciousness of their differences from other divisions of Christendom. But this distinction is not in all respects sufficient. The several Churches and Denominations are historical formations of a very complicated kind. In their origin

various factors co-operated. And as they advanced, widely diverse moods, conceptions, and tendencies of Christian piety have found their place within them. Our consideration of these differences should not be limited to cases of ecclesiastical or doctrinal separation. The distribution of Christendom according to special creeds and organisations is too narrow and fails to do justice to all its varieties. On the other hand, it should also be observed that certain characteristic forms of religious thought and life have again and again appeared anew, with slight modifications, at various times and in various parts of Christendom. These are the typical forms of the Christian Religion to which I should now like to direct your attention. Their boundaries do not coincide with those of the separate Churches and Denominations. It is true that specific ecclesiastical communities tend, according to their inherent nature, to one or other of these types. But in the course of history several of these typical forms have shown themselves within one and the same confessional group both successively and side by side; and on the other hand, essentially the same typical forms are found in different Churches and Denominations.

Most of these typical forms of Christianity have also their analogy in other religions. It is interesting to see how Religion, with a kind of psychological necessity, always shapes itself anew in certain similarities of fundamental form. Without a doubt, Christianity, in its original genuine shape, is a religion of a different kind from all others and superior to them. But it is also true that in its historical course it has passed through modifications in which it resembles other kinds of religion.

A special type of Christianity is constituted by a union of several characteristic elements which stand in inward relation to each other. But only rarely do we find these 'types' purely and consistently coined. Under the power of tradition and other historical influences, wherever a certain type acquires predominance, other elements are sure to be present which in reality belong to another type. Pious people endure great inconsistencies where reverence for venerable traditions is concerned. The most prominent Christian personalities who present themselves as characteristic representatives of a certain type, like Augustine or Luther, show great inconsistencies in carrying it out. Such inconsistencies impart to them their peculiar

individual stamp. In such inconsistency lies also a certain advantage — a reason for success and influence. For it carries with it a many-sided attractiveness. Men of various religious disposition thus find their points of union. But in the long run the inconsistency proves a disadvantage among the adherents of the leading personalities, it begets disputes, and the longer it lasts, the more it requires correction. This manifold mixture of the elements of various types renders a certain abstraction necessary in order to fix the character of the separate types. They cannot be historically determined as simply as the essential distinctions of churches and denominations. On the other hand, it is not permissible to construct freely the various types of Christianity. They must be shown in history. We need therefore a harmony of historical conception and of a faculty capable of discovering and abstracting the elements which are characteristic and mutually congruous.

At the foundation of all the forms of Christianity lies a group of ideas which constitutes the common Christian type in distinction from other religions. 1. The Monotheistic conception of God. 2. The

hope of a future salvation after the close of the present world. 3. The assurance of a salvation which is already realised in the present. 4. The duty of repentance and change from sin to holiness. 5. Reverence for Jesus Christ as Saviour and Mediator. I name these points intentionally in a very abstract general way. For only in this general conception are they really common to the various forms of Christianity. The differences of these types are seen in their more detailed development in the prominence given to some points, and the reserve upon others. The specifically Christian character is most clearly indicated by the estimation of Jesus Christ. But the different explanations of this point afford the clearest expression of the differences among the typical forms of Christianity.

I should like to mention, first, two types whose peculiarity is based on the fact that the Monotheistic idea of God is characteristically modified: the Superstitious Type, and the Dualistic Type.

The essence of the superstitious type is, that practical piety occupies itself with a multitude of superior beings and miraculous objects, to which an important significance

for salvation is ascribed. This pious worship directs itself in the first place to angels and saints, to Mary, to statues, pictures, and relics. This does not exclude a special reverence for Jesus Christ. The importance of Christ consists in the fact that he is the highest mediator and is the cause of the appearance of many other Christian mediators. He has apostles, martyrs, saints. From him do holy swaddling clothes, a holy coat, a holy cross, derive their being,—a multitude of relics of the first rank. Theoretically, of course, Monotheism remains established. It is the fact, however, that in this superstitious form of Christianity the essence of the Polytheistic religion is repeated. In the ancient church it was occasionally directly asserted that God put the Christian martyrs in the place of the so-called gods of the heathen, and that the festivals dedicated to the martyrs were substituted for the heathen festivals. Moreover, in most polytheistic religions a certain monotheistic background has not been wanting. The superstitious type of Christianity exercises the same kind of charm as heathen polytheism. Fancy finds it much easier to assume a living intercourse with

higher beings similar to ourselves than with the purely spiritual absolute God. The intermediate beings between God and man, the saints who formerly were themselves men on earth, are supposed to have a better understanding of human weakness, troubles, needs, and desires, than the transcendent God Himself. Therefore they are welcome as intercessors and helpers in need. Men dare to place before them many external, selfish, and sinful wishes, which they would not venture to express directly to a holy supramundane God. Just for this reason the earnestness of penitence and of moral works of love is as a rule apt to disappear from this superstitious type of Christianity.

This superstitious Christianity is not comprised in any creed or ecclesiastical organisation. It has no theology; it has only a comparatively small and obscure literature, but it is very widely spread. It has been, since the fourth Century, especially in oriental and occidental Catholicism, the vulgar form of Christianity.

The dualistic type finds its characteristic in the fact that Christian thought and practical piety are essentially controlled by the certainty, that there is a fun-

damental difference between the heavenly world of God and the material world of the earth, and that mankind occupies a place in the struggle between these two worlds and the powers which rule them. The essential element of this Dualism is not only found where both worlds and principles are theoretically conceived as absolutely self-governing and mutually opposed, but also where they are practically regarded as having actually the same effectiveness and importance, as if they were independent of each other.

Christianity first grew up in a dualistic atmosphere. The dualistic views of the ancient Babylonian and Persian religions had greatly influenced Jewish ideas at the time of the rise of Christianity. How great a part the belief in the devil and in demons then played among the Jews! They appeared practically as an independent power by the side of the heavenly world of God. But the Babylonian and Persian dualism had also influenced the whole spirit of religious syncretism which was at that time prevalent in the world of Graeco-Roman civilization, especially in Asia Minor. It is, therefore, easy to understand that

Christianity also took up into itself dualistic elements. It gave an immediate opening to this by its conception of the transcendence of God, by its hope of heavenly life, and by its emphasis on the radical opposition of good and evil.

The most definite dualistic type of Christianity is seen in the Gnosticism of the 2nd Century. Its fundamental idea is that Humanity in its double nature belongs on the one side to the material world, but on the other side includes within itself 'sparks' from the higher divine world, which have fallen into the material world and are imprisoned in it. On this participation in the 'sparks' of the divine world rests the need and the capacity for salvation. Christ appears as the Saviour because he is a being sent by God from the higher spirit-world, who does not carry anything material in himself. The bliss of the redeemed lies in the future in heaven. But this condition can already, in some measure, be anticipated in the present by asceticism. Asceticism is the specific form of practical activity in the dualistic view.

This consistent Gnostic dualism was deprived of all justification within the field of Christianity by the victory of Catholicism at

the close of the second Century. But Dualism was not eradicated by this triumph. In the first place Dualistic Manicheism long threatened great danger to the ancient church. It was not originally a Christian sect, but an independent religious system of Babylonian origin. But in its dualistic and ascetic nature the Manichean System completely resembled Gnosticism. In the fourth and the fifth Centuries Manicheism was an important competitor of Catholic Christianity, and drew over to itself many Christians. Secondly. During the Middle Ages Dualism obtained a wide diffusion within the Christian World. Dualistic sects, though cruelly persecuted by the Catholic church, were long spread in both East and West. Thirdly. There was and there is Dualism also in alliance with Catholicism, and this catholic dualism is still more important than that against which the church contended. In this respect the belief in the devil and the demons is less important than the whole ascetic tendency which has so powerfully ruled and still rules the Catholicism of the East and the West;—the belief that the natural impulses and processes of sense in human beings are in themselves evil, and

must be as far as possible suppressed. Asceticism may be an accessory with Christians, just as it easily unites itself also to various other religious types. But it may also be a ruling factor, so that practical piety concentrates itself upon it, and seeks therein its truest satisfaction. This happens with the Anchorites and the Monks. There is, indeed, also a very worldly Monachism. But the real idea of Monachism is concentrated Asceticism.

By the side of Dualism appears also in the earliest age of Christianity another important type, the Enthusiastic. Characteristic of this type is its intense hope for the promised salvation,—the certain expectation that this future bliss will speedily be realised. Consequently, Jesus Christ is essentially regarded as the one who will return, and who will immediately bring in this perfect state. With this future the present evil condition of the world is in strong contrast. In the present, however, there is a real participation in the blessings of salvation in so far as there are active divine powers of the spirit, which reveal themselves miraculously in enthusiastic organs of the Spirit. Enthusiastic preaching is, of course, directed chiefly to the speedy coming

of Christ. Here final salvation is chiefly conceived as realising itself on this earth, and in this sense is Chiliastic. The practical conduct demanded consists in repentant preparation for the end of the world. The believer must turn away from worldly business in order to direct his thoughts intensely upon the 'End.'

This Enthusiastic Type first played an important part in the apostolic and post-apostolic times. Men lived and moved during that period in the certainty of possessing miraculous spiritual powers, and in the expectation of the speedy second coming of Christ. This type also had its special literature—that of 'apocalypse' or 'revelation.' The 'Apocalypse' of John and the 'Shepherd' of Hermas are its chief documents. They were not by any means, however, the only literary products of this tendency. But it belongs to the essence of this type, that it cannot keep itself alive for any great length of time. The miraculous enthusiastic utterances of the spirit which at first excite the utmost wonder, become stranger the longer they last. Sober criticism faces them. In consequence of their mysterious incomprehensible nature they are also un-

workable and may be grossly abused. The 'ecstasies' may be produced and heightened artificially, and this is often done out of mere vanity. The fixed and orderly teaching office, in the course of time, becomes more and more acknowledged as the necessary and the better substitute for this enthusiastic revelation. Moreover the tension of hope for the near end of the world can not be propagated from generation to generation. This hope becomes lame, and instead of escaping from the world to prepare for its close, men accommodate themselves to it and practically rely on its continuance.

Such was the course of the earliest Christianity, where gradually a church with fixed offices, especially with a regular ministry of teaching, was established. The dogma of the end of the world remained valid, but it referred to the distant future. And the certainty that there were miraculous agents of the Spirit in the Church, referred essentially to the past; in former days were the Apostles inspired.

These ecclesiastical and secular influences, however, have again and again begotten a re-action by a Christianity of the Enthusiastic type. Wherever it appears, it claims to be a renewal of Apostolic teaching, and

to bring a revival of apostolic gifts and apostolic hope.

In ancient times it was Montanism which thus re-acted against the Church and the church ministry, appealing to a new living prophecy, renewing the Chiliastic eschatological hopes, and calling for earnest repentance. But the same phenomenon has constantly re-appeared in later times. In the middle ages individuals and communities repeatedly arose in the spirit of apostles and apocalyptists, who showed this enthusiastic eschatological type. As an example we may mention the Abbot Joachim of Flora at the end of the twelfth century, whose apocalyptic prophecies long afterwards produced a great stir amongst the Cistercian and Franciscan Monks. At the time of the Reformation the Anabaptists were the representatives of this type with all its characteristic features. In later periods I might name in England the Quakers, the Swedenborgians from Sweden, and the widely-spread Irvingites who also called themselves the 'apostolic community.' Essentially the same form of Christianity exists also in Russian sects. The Chlystians (i.e. the scourgers) and the Skopzians (i.e. self-

mutilators) are Russian sects which appeal to prophecy and inward illumination, and at the same time practise a crass asceticism, aiming especially at incapacitation for marriage. To the same group belong the Duchoborzians (i.e. spiritual fighters) who emigrated in large numbers to North America, and whose wanderings in Canada excited much attention a few years ago. They left their dwellings in order to meet the impending advent of Christ.

Enthusiasm in its inmost nature is opposed to ecclesiastical organisation—it is Separatist and Sectarian. If the 'Enthusiastic' Christians adopt some kind of church order to perpetuate their ideas, they really fall into an inner contradiction, and their original character is thereby weakened.

Within the organised Church, and with special reverence for ecclesiastical ordinances and institutions, two types may be specially observed, the Mystic and the Orthodox Forensic.

Mysticism is widely spread in Christianity. It is by no means specifically Christian. It is strongly developed also in the oriental religions. It played a great part in later Hellenism. Neoplatonism especially cherished religious mysticism, and both the character

and motives of Christian mysticism were closely related to this Hellenistic mysticism.

The essential nature of mysticism is the aspiration after an *immediate* communion with God, which can be felt and enjoyed. The high religious value of mysticism lies in the fact that it seeks God not only as a means for obtaining further blessings or as a protection from evils, but as an end in himself. The mystic strives after communion with God as something blissful in itself, in contrast to the stale pleasures of the world.

Mysticism can show very different aspects. There is a dominantly philosophic intellectual spiritual mysticism, looking on the world pantheistically. The individual desires only to be completely merged in the Deity, in order to be absorbed in the Absolute. This Pantheism may be indifferent to the facts of history and the ritual ordinances of a religious community. Wherever it has been strongly emphasised it has come into conflict with the Church. But as a rule Christian mysticism develops within the Church, and in firm connection with the ecclesiastical cults. Side by side with private contemplation, i.e., with the concentration of thought and imagination on God and Christ, the church rites were the most important

means of calling forth the feeling of removal from the world and of union with God. The cultus may be so ordered as to be of essential aid in producing and heightening this mystical mood. Reasonable words, edifying sermons, become of less importance, the whole weight falls on what influences the feelings, artistic decoration, music, pictures, ceremonial pomp; and the chief point is that according to the mystic view the Church, and the Church alone, is the custodian of the means of salvation leading to the highest union with God—not only in spirit but even in substance. To win participation in the Divine nature is the final goal of the Christian mystic. The full possession of the Divine nature he only expects hereafter. But this future may be already founded in the present, and a foretaste of its blessedness may be experienced here. For this purpose the Church is entrusted with the holy sacraments. They constitute a system of graces designed to secure to man during his earthly life a beginning of his blessed higher nature. The clergy are in possession of the powers by which alone these sacraments can be effectively prepared and administered. These powers are transferred by legitimate consecration from one possessor to another. The divine nature

is only to be obtained and enjoyed through firm union with the Church, with the legitimate clergy, and with their sacramental acts.

What is the significance of Christ for this mystic type of Christianity? He is sent by God as the chief hierurg (sacred agent), who has established the sacred order and the holy sacraments. The inheritance of the consecration, which he first of all possessed, and left to his apostles, continues in the Church. He is the personal representative of the mystic union of divine and created natures, which by the mysteries of the Church is communicated to others. In this communion with Christ the believer obtains a share in his divine nature. This communion with Christ, however, is not conceived as a spiritual and ethical devotion to the teaching of the historic Jesus, but rather as a sacramental union with the transfigured heavenly Christ. Only in connection with this mystical view can we understand the meaning and the object of the dogma (elaborated in the ancient Greek church) of the natures of Christ, which became one in his person. Here is the secret of the intense religious interest which resulted in the formation and maintenance of this doctrine. The pre-existing Logos is the representative of the Divine nature. He unites

the human nature with the divine in order to deify human nature by this union. And this process, which has first been completed in him, is to be carried through human nature as a whole by means of the Church mysteries especially by the Eucharist. The most important event of salvation is therefore the Incarnation of the Logos. During his sojourn on earth, however, Christ establishes the clergy and the mysteries, by means of which the process of the deification of human nature accomplished in him is also made accessible to others.

Mysticism of this kind was at home in the Catholic Church from ancient times, both in the Greek, where Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita was its classical literary representative; and in the west. It was the higher form of Catholic piety by the side of the superstitious vulgar one. It dwelt chiefly in the cloister, for it united itself easily with ascetic views and ways of life. Whoever longs for the moments of blessed communion with God, must turn away from worldly intercourse, troubles, and pleasures. He who wishes the higher divine nature to grow within him during his earthly life, must repress and mortify his carnal earthly nature.

In the middle ages also mysticism was not the practice of those who felt themselves inwardly separated from the great Church. The earlier notion that the medieval mystics in Germany, like Eckart, Tauler, Suso, etc., were men of essentially evangelical opinions and predecessors of the Reformation, is erroneous. Practically, the medieval mysticism, with the exception of the few who exaggerated the Pantheistic tendency, was thoroughly in harmony with ecclesiastical dogma. And to this the authoritative leaders of the Catholic church, such as Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugo of St. Victor, Thomas of Aquino, Bonaventura—to mention only a few names—all in their personal piety did homage. But, indeed, it has not been confined to Catholicism. As Luther, the editor of the mystical little book, 'German Theology,' in his many-sided mind felt mystical moods and inclinations, so in later times mysticism often flourished vigorously on the soil of Protestantism. It was specially cherished in the Dutch and German pietism, and in the Moravian community. Mystical contemplation and imagination, flight from the world, interest for the cultus and the sacraments, have, of course, a somewhat different form among Protestants compared

with Catholics. At bottom, however, the nature of mystical piety is the same in both.

But there are many natures for which earnest mysticism is unsuited. It is not the business of sober practical characters. It pre-supposes a certain sentimental psychic disposition. It can only be cultivated by people who have plenty of time to spare, and are not heavily pressed by work. Even with people who are inwardly and outwardly disposed for it, it is only at certain times that mystical emotions are in vigorous flow, and afford them full enjoyment. At other periods the mystic feels tired and arid, so that he does not attain to the real soaring of the soul.

By the side of the Mystic type within the church there stands the orthodox Forensic type. Orthodoxy arises through fear of danger from the subjective arbitrariness of religious thought and life, and consequent reverence for the Church with its ministers, its dogmas, and its institutions, as necessary means for the preservation of genuine Christianity. In contrast to the conception that there are actual and continuous revelations in living Christian individuals, orthodoxy is sure that the real revelation is closed,—firmly set in the Holy Scriptures and the creeds. The Church

rejoices in the possession of the full truth, and has the task of guarding and transmitting this treasure of the past. Orthodoxy is therefore hostile to Christian enthusiasm (in the sense in which we have here used the term). This orthodox temper easily allies itself with the application of juridical modes of thinking to religion. God is represented as the the highest lawgiver and judge. Christianity as a whole is regarded as a new law, the guardian of which is the Church. The individual Christian has to show his piety by obedience to church ordinances and ecclesiastical authority. The duty of belief is a duty of blind acceptance of the doctrines sanctioned by the Church. Alongside of this belief, great weight may be laid on practical activity, on good works, especially on those of a ritual and an ascetic character. He is deemed a pious Christian who performs these works correctly, according to church precepts. Whoever performs more than is necessary, obtains merit; and he who accomplishes great things above measure, becomes a saint. The transgression of the church's commands requires satisfaction. This is the view of Roman Catholic orthodoxy. In Protestant orthodoxy indeed there is a different estimate of good works. Faith alone has

worth before God. But this faith is practically—though not according either to the original intention of the Reformers, or to dogmatic theory—a sort of legal work, an obedient acceptance of church teachings.

It is characteristic of this forensic conception of the religious relationship between God and man, that the forgiving grace of God is linked to the condition of a vicarious satisfaction of the justice and the legal claims of God. The order of law is conceived on the whole as inviolable. The grace of God shows itself simply in this—that he permits and contrives a substitution in favour of the sinner. It is in this sense that the Catholic Church formed its doctrine of the indulgence; namely that the surplus merits of the saints form a treasure of the Church, which can be utilized by the Church for lightening the satisfaction required of the penitent sinner. From the same point of view Anselm formed his theory of the necessity of a God-man, whose undeserved sufferings should provide the vicarious satisfaction without which God could not forgive sinful men. Protestant orthodoxy did not take over the Catholic theory of penance, and the vicarious merits and satisfaction of the saints, but it has highly

valued Anselm's kindred theory of the vicarious satisfaction of Christ.

In interest for the church ministry and ordinances orthodoxy joins hands with mysticism. The mysteries which mysticism rates so highly, form at the same time the most important object for the devout orthodox believer. The orthodox and mystical types of Christianity, as a rule, do not exclude each other, but in many ways they are mutually complementary. They appear in the same persons like two alternating tendencies. Yet in essence they must be kept apart. They are not always in harmony. Orthodoxy, in its ecclesiastical correctness, may be barren of all pious warmth and inwardness; and in that case mysticism with its longing for an inward pious life and feeling may find itself in contrast to orthodoxy. Mysticism, on the other hand, in its stress upon pious contemplation, may show a certain contempt for correct dogmatics. Thus in Protestantism pietistic devotion at first stood in decided opposition to orthodoxy, while, as time advanced, Lutheran and reformed orthodoxy became more and more pietistic, and pietism more and more orthodox. Christians of the mystical type in the various denominations feel themselves mutually related and

attracted ; doctrinal differences play for them an unimportant part. The same hymns and books of devotion are used and loved by Catholic and Evangelical mystics. But the orthodox of the various denominations call each other heretics. Orthodoxy is essentially intolerant. Like the enthusiastic, the mystic and the orthodox types have a common joy in the miraculous, the supernatural, and the super-rational. But there is a Christianity of another mould, to which this fondness for miracles is a rock of offence ; this is the rational-moralistic type.

In contradistinction to the supernatural revelation of God the rationalist Christians lay stress on the revelation in the ordinary occurrences of the world of nature and in the life of men. Genuine Christianity is not, in their conception, a doctrine which adds new miraculous enigmas to the riddles of nature, but rather a view of the world which gives the true solution of the problems already there. As there is no need of a specific supernatural revelation, there is also none of the ecclesiastical authorities who vouch for the supernatural revealed truths. The highest appeal and authority, even in religious matters, must be reason. Rationalist Christians emphasize the

harmony of Christianity with philosophy. They practise reasonable criticism and scepticism on everything professedly supernatural. They try to eliminate the miraculous elements or to reduce them to something which can be understood. They seek rational proofs for God's being, for his wise creation and providence, and for the immortality of the soul. Those ideas seem to them the essential contents of the Christian religion, and they believe that they are able to realize them along the path of philosophy.

Allied with this reliance on rational thought and evidence is a strenuous moralism. This union is not accidental. It is the same opposition to ecclesiastical authority which emphasises the autonomy of both reason and conscience. It is the same tendency to prefer the indirect to the direct relation to the supernatural, which lays the chief stress on the indirect revelation in the natural world of God, and the indirect worship of God in ethical conduct towards fellow-men. Religion, as Kant says, is the conception of our moral duties as commands of God. In this insistence on morals the ethical freedom of man becomes very prominent. Next to the belief in divine providence and immortality stands belief in

liberty and in the value of virtue. Christianity is in harmony alike with philosophy, and with civilisation and humanity.

What is the significance of Christ in this conception? He is the teacher of rational religious thought and a supreme pattern of virtue.

The essential features of this rationalist moral type meet us in early times, amongst the Apologists in the second century. Even Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, consider this kind of piety as the higher grade of Christianity, compared with the lower stage of the mere believers. But within the Catholic church there was no place for a fully-formed consistent piety of this kind. During the middle ages the *Aufklärung* (or Illumination), wherever it showed itself, as, for example, in the German Emperor Frederick II., was in opposition to the Church, or it was brought into artificial compromise with orthodoxy. The latter was the case in the teaching of Duns Scotus and his school, the essence of which was a rationalist scepticism towards supernatural truths, though this was finally annulled by a continuous appeal to ecclesiastical authority. It was only towards the end of the middle ages that rational Christianity

found a freer development in Humanism. Its characteristic representative in the age of the Reformation was Erasmus of Rotterdam. Out of this humanistic tendency arose Socinianism; and subsequently this type of Christianity received its classical expression in English Deism and in the German Rationalism of the age of 'illumination.'

In Rationalism the rejection of the craving for miracles, the renunciation of mysterious dogmas, the strong emphasis on morality, constitute a merit, a power, an approach to the original nature of the gospel of Jesus. But the tendency to reduce religious knowledge to truths of reason, and religious life to moral conduct, may be so exaggerated as to involve the loss of real religion. All genuine religion bears at its heart the conviction that man can enter into immediate communion with the supra-mundane, and for this he can never cease to long.

But this always contains something supra-rational, supernatural. To strip religion of these elements is to rob it of its special character and value in comparison with philosophy and natural morals. The essence of Christianity in particular includes faith in the unmerited grace of the Heavenly

Father, and the sense of happiness in this saving grace. By a rationalism and an ethical culture which cannot comprehend the gladness of this gracious communion with the Heavenly Father, Christianity is only degraded.

In history this tendency has provoked reaction not only from mysticism or orthodoxy but also from a special type in which this element of the immediate divine activity of grace is most strongly developed,—the type of the vivid consciousness of guilt and grace. Pelagius is opposed by Augustine, who reproduces on his side certain ideas and tendencies of Paul.

This Augustinian type is in so far akin to the enthusiastic and mystic types that it deals with actual experiences of the gifts and powers of the Spirit of God. In this sense it may itself be called a mystical one. But its distinction is that it attributes to this immediate divine grace a special reference to moral weakness and guilt. In this reference to the moral life it comes near to rationalist moralism. But it is precisely in its relation to ethics that the sharp contrast of these two types is revealed. Rationalist moralism is concerned with human liberty

and power for good. It regards the ethical condition of the natural man optimistically. Augustinian piety, on the other hand, is based on a deep feeling of human bondage, moral impotence, and guilt. In its view of the ethical condition of the natural man it is altogether pessimist. But to human sin it opposes divine grace, which is all-powerful, forgives guilt, and imparts moral strength.

The Augustinian type of Christianity led to the development of the doctrines of original sin and predestination. These doctrines in their regular dogmatic setting involve great rigours: they draw dangerous consequences after them; it is easy to criticise them. But the important point is not this dogmatic setting, but the feeling of piety which seeks in them its expression and elucidation; the vivid sense, on the one hand, of man's moral powerlessness, emptiness, and nothingness without God, and on the other of blessedness and strength in the support of the grace of God. Christianity is for Augustine, as Prof. Harnack says, 'the pain of sin comforted,'—an intense pain at the disastrous power of sin, and along with it a rapturous consoling feeling of the much greater power of the grace of God, the heart

being swayed between these two feelings which from time to time gain strength and force by the contrast.

Does this Augustinian view provide a place for Christ as a mediator of salvation? It is evident that the dogmatic theory of the vicarious atonement of Christ is not in inward harmony with the consistent presentation of the absoluteness of the grace of God and of the eternal predestination of the individual by grace to salvation. If God's gracious purpose abides unchanged from all eternity, there is no need of a historic event in time to make the bestowal of divine grace possible. But as Augustine in some passages explains, the significance of Christ lies in his proclamation and recommending to men the grace of God, not only by words, but by his whole person. For he is a personal representation of the might of divine grace; in him is shown the full victory of God's spirit over flesh and sin. Thus by his appearance and activity, he imparts knowledge of God's grace, and confidence in its power to overcome sin.

This Augustinian piety has remained unknown to the Graeco-Russian church. In the West, under the influence of Augustine,

it has been alive at various times. It may have, as with Augustine himself and the Augustinians of the Middle Ages, a regular Catholic and ecclesiastical bearing. But this is not inevitable. It formed an important element also in the piety of all the Reformers of the sixteenth century. It is developed and maintained with especial consistency in Calvinism. Finally, it received a peculiar stamp in the German Pietism of Spener and Francke, and in Methodism. The danger of this type of Christianity consists in this; that notwithstanding its sharp condemnation of sin, it may yet lead to a paralysis of moral energy. As the feeling of guilt may be exaggerated, artificially heightened, and forced, so, on the other hand, the thought of the divine grace as the agent of all goodness may make the moral exertion of man himself appear superfluous. Through grace the believer supposes that he not only receives full forgiveness of sin, but also possesses a perfect and completed holiness. In the blessed enjoyment of this grace he thinks that he may remain inactive.

Have I now exhausted all the important types of Christianity? One is yet wanting, the most important and genuine of all. Every-

one who reads the gospels without special denominational or dogmatic spectacles, will admit that the piety which Jesus himself exhibited and tried to infuse into his disciples, did not resemble any of the types already mentioned. Jesus was neither superstitious nor ascetic, neither of the enthusiastic nor the mystical type, neither orthodox nor rationalist, nor predestinarian. His religious thought and teaching were entirely governed by the idea that God is the Father, filled with fatherly love, and acting not on legal principles but with the genuine ethical character of a true father. This idea in all its simplicity and elevation produced in the teaching of Jesus the union of the most confident hope of salvation with the highest moral earnestness. The thought of Jesus was strongly eschatological. Nevertheless it was free from the excitement of the enthusiasts who abandoned the world. For he was sure that the true children of God were already, during this earthly life, in constant and living communion with the Heavenly Father, and continually experienced his fatherly love. But Jesus did not look for this communion with God in passing ecstatic raptures, and he gave no instructions to his

disciples to obtain a mystical foretaste of future bliss by contemplation, by exalted imagination, or by sacramental rites. What he himself possessed, and what he demanded from his disciples, and promised them, was the refreshing rest, the inward peace, and the perfect joyousness, which spring up from a child-like confidence in the Heavenly Father,—the confidence that God in his love for man bestows all that he needs for obtaining eternal life. This repose of child-like faith in God may be maintained in toil and trouble, in suffering and persecution, and even in the torments of death. But this peaceful faith in God was by no means identical with the cessation of action, or the merely passive experience of divine grace. The fatherly love of God involves for man a most important duty,—a duty to be performed with freedom and responsibility, with a steady watchfulness and effort. It demands not only moral conduct towards other men, but first of all a heartfelt love and obedient devotion towards God Himself. Nor is this all. It calls further for a lively brotherly love shown in helpful service, a spontaneous, forgiving love, after the image of the Heavenly Father. With what

loyal performance of the work divinely laid on him, and with what intense labour of love and sacrifice, did Jesus fulfil his duty as a child of God !

This, then, is a special type of Christian piety: I will call it the Gospel Type : when Christian thought and life, in the sense of the Gospel of Jesus, are governed by the idea of the Fatherhood of God, and the aspiration after divine sonship ; when such sonship becomes active in vivid hope of everlasting life, in firm faith in God through all the conditions and trials of life, and in spontaneous brotherly love ; and when the significance of salvation by Jesus Christ is found in his revelation, as perfect Son of God, of God's fatherly love, and in the powerful impulses which he has exerted on men to draw them into this blessed sonship. This Gospel type of Christian piety has no analogy in other religions. It has found its expression in Apostolic times in many grand passages of the Pauline letters, and above all in the first epistle of John, which in my view is the genuine work of the disciple who stood nearest to Jesus, the most beautiful record of a mind directly inspired by his words and life. In the middle ages, I would name as its representative St. Francis

of Assisi. Monasticism and conformity to ecclesiastical order were in this man only the historical condition of his piety, a vesture essentially foreign and inconsistent. Fundamentally he had the mind of a child of God like Jesus, full of devotion and joyful trust, and at the same time conscious of the duties of love. Luther was the next hero of this gospel piety. He fought against the legalism and superstition of Catholic piety. But he did not meet it with the enthusiasm of the Anabaptists or the rationalism of the Humanists. Moreover, he was not a mere renovator of strict Augustinianism, or representative of inward Mysticism, much as he was influenced by these types of Christian piety. His special greatness lay in his preaching the gospel of sonship to God as the power which inwardly liberates and blesses man, a sonship which cherishes courageous trust in God's mercy and protection, and raises all worldly duties and callings by loving service into true acts of devotion. For this gospel type of Christianity Luther re-conquered a firm position in the Church. Since his time it has had a multitude of representatives in all parts of Christendom, which came under the influence of the Reform-

ation, and, what is more important, under the influence of the Gospel.

It is true that in Protestantism this gospel type did not at once reach a consistent development. Luther himself shows a mixture of various typical elements, and Protestantism subsequently did the same. In practical piety and in theological doctrine, under the influence of ancient traditions, elements of various nature and origin were brought into a rather superficial connection with the specific gospel ideas and ideals. The old Protestant dogmatic derived its Christology from the early Greek church, the doctrine of satisfaction from Anselm, the doctrines of original sin and predestination from Augustine, and further adopted a sacramental doctrine, which, in its Lutheran expression, at least, is closely related to the Catholic. When the student of the history of dogma observes the original connections of these doctrines, he has already gained a critical view of their combination with the gospel ideas. Such criticism becomes a great task when the theologian recognises that the gospel type of Christianity is not only one amongst others of equal value, but the highest and best authorised of all. Its aim is to bring this type to a consistent uni-

form development, and thus to carry on the work begun by the Reformers. Since Schleiermacher's time Protestant theology in Germany has become more and more conscious of this task. This is the goal towards which, at least in the present day, a large number of the German theologians aspire, to lead Christianity back to its original form, to the simplicity and sublimity of the primitive teaching of Jesus. We know full well that times and circumstances have changed, and that a mechanical acceptance of his words, conditioned as these were by the thoughts and circumstances of his age, is impossible. To raise up the spirit of Jesus and secure the elements of lasting value in his religious thought, we need a certain abstraction; we must distinguish the essential from the unessential, and what belongs only to its time. Moreover we must carry this fundamental conception of Jesus into the ideas of our own day; we must bring it into harmony with the problems suggested by modern science; we must apply it to the practical needs of society around us. This is a difficult task; it can only be executed with tenderness and tact. But of all the tasks to which theology is called, it is the greatest and noblest.

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